

THE POULTRY MESSENGER

& WESTERN FRUIT-GROWER.

Vol. 1,

AURELIA, IOWA, DECEMBER, 1895.

No. 10.

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My 1896 catalogue which will be ready in December should be in the hands of every lover of thoroughbred poultry. Though it contains more information than some books costing a dollar, I send it free if you ask for it.

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BREEDING FOR EGGS.

Fowls can just as surely be bred for egg production as for shape, color or any other quality most desired. The poultry keeper who wants to make the most of his opportunities must accept this as a fact, and keep it constantly in mind in the management of his flocks. All hens, scrub or otherwise, will lay some eggs in mid winter if properly housed and cared for, but where they have been selected for several generations with a view to egg production they can be made to furnish double the quantity of eggs which can by any means be obtained from a flock which has been handled without special attention to these qualities. This difference is so marked that it is difficult to get people to believe it who have not been close observers in this particular or made an actual test of the matter. If you bought eggs of a breeder last spring, and hatched them out in season, you can pretty nearly tell what sort of an egg business the seller is having at present without writing to him. The pullets will tell you all that it is to your interest to know about the matter. This is on the presumption, of course, that you are an experienced and competent poultryman, and know what is required in a general way in order to get hens to lay in winter.

Now is the time for the poultryman who wishes to stock his grounds with first-class winter layers to make his selections. Let him take note of the hens that are now furnishing the eggs, and mark them in some way so that they can be recognized and placed in a coop to themselves in the spring. We would not select a hen for this purpose that had any glaring defect of form or plumage, no matter how good a layer she might be. We would not advise any sacrifice of the latter qualities in favor of the one of egg production, and it is not necessary to make such a sacrifice in order to obtain the results which we have named. It is possible to have birds

of fine form and plumage, and at the same time be extra good layers, but, of course, these combined qualities are not so easily developed in the same fowls as either one of them would be while no regard was being paid to the others.

Reduced Express Rates.

The express companies have made an important concession to the thoroughbred poultry interests by agreeing to make a heavy reduction in their rates for carrying live fowls other than market stock. The new rate, however, is attended with certain conditions with which the shipper will be obliged to comply in order to get the advantage of it. The birds must be shipped in wooden, slat coops. The frail cloth covered coop must go. Not that the companies objected to the cloth, but because the cloth alone was not strong enough, and was liable to go to pieces and occasion the employees a lot of trouble. If one so desires, he may still use the cloth if it is tacked on the inside of a well made slat coop. The poultryman will very willingly comply with this rule. The lowering of the rate means new life and energy to the thoroughbred poultry industry, and is something for the keepers of this class of poultry to be glad over.

The "Big 4."

The "Big 4" Poultry Show will begin at Sioux City the 9th of this month and continue over the 14th; Hewes, judge, and W. A. Mills, secretary. We are assured that the poultry breeders of the northwest are taking a lively interest in this show, and they will make it the best which has ever been held in that city.

Very Cheap.

We have a limited number of copies of "The Art of Incubation and Brooding." This book ought to be in the hands of everyone desiring to inform themselves in regard to the hatching

and rearing of fowls by artificial means. It is written by men of much experience in that line, and embraces about all that can be taught the novice in the way of printed instructions. The price of the book is one dollar. We will furnish it to anyone postpaid for five subscribers.

At the Top of the Heap.

The commercial value of the poultry products of this big country of ours outrank the wheat crop, the corn crop, the cattle crop—in fact any one of the leading farm products of the country. And yet we have a great army of people who look upon poultry keeping as a small business, and altogether beneath their notice. These people are a long ways behind the times, and they need to know it. They are not in sight of the tail end of the procession of modern progress. They ought to get a move on themselves.

POULTRY SHOWS.

- Dec. 24-27, N. W. Nebraska Poultry Assn., Beatrice, Neb., E. E. Greer, Sec., C. A. Emry, Judge.
- Dec. 3-7, Davenport, Iowa; McClave, Judge, H. C. Goettsch, Sec.
- Dec. 2, Iowa State Poultry Assn., Ottumwa, Ia., W. S. Russell, Sec., Shellabarger Emry, Judges.
- Dec. 16-20, Lansing, Mich; F. B. Shaw, Secretary; Marshall, Judge
- Jan. 15-22, Minnesota State Poultry Association, Minneapolis, Jos H. Prior, Sec, Butterfield and Holden, Judges.
- Jan. 20-24, Michigan Poultry Ass'n Grand Rapids, Mich., Alice Mason, Sec., Grant, Mich,
- Jan. 14-18, Green River Poultry, Pigeon and Pet Stock Assn; Owensboro, Ky., I. N. Basker, Judge, Robt B. Hale, Secretary.
- Jan. 9-14, Council Bluffs, Iowa, W. A. Gronaway, Secretary.
- Dec. 30 to January 4, Northern Iowa Poultry Assn, Hampton, Iowa. Paul Jones, Sec., G. D. Holden and E. F. Hersey, Judges.

THE POULTRY HOUSE ROOF,

There appears to be a wide difference of opinion among well known authorities regarding what should be the height of the poultry house roof. Some of them contend for high walls, claiming that the ventilation is thereby made better, and that, other things being equal, the fowls will be in better health and give better results, than if kept in a house with the roof nearer to the floor. Some of the people who advocate this style of house are men of ripe experience and have been prominently before the public for years as writers on subjects pertaining to poultry culture. Their recommendations are usually accepted without question. But with all deference to these high authorities we feel compelled to say that in this matter of high walled poultry houses their experience seems to be different from that of the majority of practical poultry raisers.

The writer has one poultry house on his premises which is eight feet high to the plates, from which rises a hip roof making the building between eleven and twelve feet high at the ridge pole. It is covered with a good shingle roof. The house is plastered, has two medium sized windows on the south and is as close and warm as it seems possible for a house to be made. Attached to it is a scratching pen the whole or a part of the front to which can be exposed to the sun by opening one or more of the doors which extend entirely across it. When the doors are open a wire netting prevents the escape of the fowls from the house.

The results from every flock of hens which we have placed in this house have been disappointing. In winter when the hens in the other houses on the place—all of which have lower walls—are laying freely, we are not getting half the eggs from this house that we are entitled to. Two rods west of this house is another of the same length but not so wide by two feet. This house has walls four feet high in front, and two feet at the back. If we have ever failed to get eggs from this house in winter we knew there was a reason for it, and that the fault was not with the hens. When the hens were of the proper age and all the conditions right the eggs always appeared. At present this house is stocked with one year old Langshan hens that are laying in a

manner that would satisfy the wildest chicken crank that anybody ever saw running at large, and promise to furnish us more eggs during the winter than we have obtained in three winters from the house first referred to. There is evidently something wrong with this house which does not differ from the others on the place except in the extent of the air space overhead.

We have considered well over this matter and we cannot escape the conclusion that we make a bad mistake when we place the roofs of our poultry houses any higher than is actually necessary to enable the keeper to stand upright and do the work required of him on the inside. If we could bring ourselves to look at the matter only from the standpoint of utility, and give no thought to appearances, we would make the walls of all the poultry houses which we may build in future not more than two feet high, placing the window in the slope of the roof. Such houses would appear decidedly squat, but we are of the opinion that for practical usefulness we could not design anything better.

Naturally Lazy.

The Langshans and Plymouth Rocks if kept in confined quarters and well fed are inclined to grow fat and lazy. When thus kept they should be made to work hard for every morsel of food which they receive. Both breeds are active stout legged fowls, and most vigorous scratchers, if put where they will be obliged to scratch or go hungry. Cover the floor of the scratching pen a foot deep with straw or leaves, and when the grain is thrown in this litter stir it up well with the feet in order to sink it as near as possible to the bottom. This will compel hard work on the part of the hens, and it is the best way to get rid of the fat. It is a difficult matter to feed these breeds what they ought to have in winter without making them too fat, unless some such means at this is adopted for keeping them in good laying condition.

A Question of Cheapness.

Feed is cheap only when it is used successfully to accomplish the object for which it is fed. If fed to hens the usual object is to obtain eggs. If this object is not accomplished the feed is not cheap, no matter how small the amount of money which may have been

paid for it. The most costly feed which the poultryman can give his hens is often that which can be obtained at the least expense. We know it to be a common oversight among people who keep poultry to fail to provide themselves with a class of supplies which no owner of fowls should think of doing without. It appears to them like extravagance to buy these things, when as a matter of fact nothing which they could buy would prove a more economical expenditure of money.

Guarding Against Bad Habits.

The pullets have now just rightly started to laying, and it will be necessary to be watchful about the poultry house in order to secure all the eggs. Pullets are very apt to drop their eggs on the floor or in the straw of the scratching pen. They are not so liable to do this after they advance a little farther towards mature henhood. Eggs which are thus left on the floor are in danger of being broken, and when this occurs the contents will be eaten by the fowls. The egg-eating habit may thus be fully developed among the pullets before they have fairly entered upon their usefulness as layers. Do not make the coating of straw in the scratching pen very heavy at the start, as the eggs which may be dropped there can then be more easily seen. Visit the poultry house often for the purpose of removing the eggs which are found outside of the nest boxes. Anyone who has ever had a houseful of egg-eating hens on his hands will agree with us when we say that it is well worth a little extra time and trouble to save the pullets from becoming addicted to this vice.

One Hour a Day.

One man can look after a hundred hens during the winter, and give them good care, and not be employed at the task more than an hour a day. This is on the presumption that the houses are in good condition, and the man's time is not taken up in making them ready for the winter. The amount of work required to properly look after a flock of chickens is greatly misunderstood. What needs to be done must be done on time, but if one knows what to do and is regular and prompt in doing it, the fowls will receive all the attention that they require, and at the expense of less time and labor on the part of the keeper than is generally supposed to be necessary.

DON'T MAKE THIS MISTAKE.

It takes experience and a good deal of it to enable one to engage in poultry keeping as a business and make it profitable. Not one person out of a hundred without the experience can undertake poultry keeping on anything like a large scale and make a living out of it. No one should allow the "hen fever" to take strong enough hold of him to cause him to doubt this fact.

People who are working on a salary which at least affords them a living are often strongly tempted to throw up such positions and devote their entire time to the running of a poultry farm. It is frequently the case that they have never had any experience in that line beyond the partial oversight of a flock of chickens which were looked after in the old fashioned way on the old family homestead. But they are not deriving an income large enough for their needs from their present employment, and the idea has become firmly fixed in their heads that they can do much better by running a poultry farm. They have used up much time and paper in figuring out the profits of such a business, and are fully convinced that if there are not millions in it, it will surely make a most handsome return on the investment. It does not seem that failure can be possible. And yet it is a fact that under these circumstances failure does follow such an undertaking as this in ninety cases out of a hundred. It is the easiest matter in the world for a man to deceive himself when he gets to figuring on the profits of poultry keeping. If he has had no experience in that line he will almost certainly figure himself into a state of mind which will lead to future disappointment and sorrow. People are doing this every day. We hear of them everywhere. And they usually charge the disaster which they meet with to the business, or to something else other than their own lack of good judgment and discretion.

The poultry journals appear to be doing all in their power to prevent people from falling into this error. All of them are continually advising their readers to begin with small flocks and learn what they need to know about the business before engaging in it in a way which would entail serious loss in case the results prove different from what had been anticipated. It is true these

journals teach that there is money to be made by keeping poultry, but they try to make it understood that this refers only to those who know how to keep poultry successfully. There is no money in any business, except as an accident, but to those who have made themselves familiar with it and prosecute it in a prudent and sensible way.

Poultry keeping is a business. It requires as much time to learn it as it does to fit one for the practice of a trade or a profession.

There are numberless poultry farms in the country which are very profitable to their owners. But nearly every one of these men can tell of a period of great discouragement and hardship in connection with their experience with poultry. That was the time of their apprenticeship to the business which is now profitable to them simply because they have learned how to make it so. Their present prosperity is not the result of accident or luck, but is the outgrowth of the study, hardship and toil of other years. Those who would meet with a like success must make up their minds to travel the same road over which they have gone. They will not attain any success in poultry keeping worthy of the name in any other way.

Feed Wheat.

Wheat should be made to form a large part—the principal part—of the grain ration given to the fowls during the winter. Give corn at night, and the fowls should be allowed to have all of it that they will eat; but whatever is given them during the day in the shape of grain should be wheat, oats and barley, but principally wheat. We could not get along in our poultry keeping affairs without wheat, and we would feed it if we were obliged to pay a dollar a bushel for it.

No Need of a Stove.

You had better drop that idea of trying to heat your poultry house with a stove. It has been pretty clearly demonstrated that artificial heat cannot be successfully employed for that purpose. There are some breeders who claim to have made it work all right, but the majority of those who try it will make a failure of it, and, besides, bring on disease among their poultry which will cause them a lot of trouble. They will not only fail to get the expected increase of eggs, but will be lucky if they

do not introduce the roup into their flock. The poultry house anywhere in the north can be made comfortable enough for the laying hens without the use of a stove. Even though there was no objection to the stove on the score above alluded to, it would still be poor economy to use it, as eggs can be obtained in abundance without it.

The Hen's Living.

In the east it is estimated that it costs a dollar a year to keep a hen. But it does not cost that to keep a hen a year here in the west. It does not cost the half of it. A hen of any good breed will lay ten dozen eggs in a year. In the west where the prices are lower than in the east, the eggs will average fifteen cents a dozen, if the hens are handled in a way to induce them to lay through the winter. If it only costs fifty cents a year to keep the hen, at this rate she will return a profit which ought to be satisfactory to her owner. Every western farmer of a 160 acres of land should realize a clear profit of two hundred dollars from poultry every year. All of them could do it if they would try.

A Worthless Hen.

Kill the hen that does not seem to know enough to come to the feeding trough when the mash is given of a morning and eat with the others. Our readers have all seen hens of this kind—great coarse headed, slow motioned things, that haven't half the sense that a hen ought to have. She will hang around on the outside of the ravenous crowd at the trough, now and then picking up a small bit which has been dropped on the floor, but not getting anything like her share of the feed. Pen the idiot up, fatten her and kill her. She will not lay an egg during the whole winter, and the sooner she is done away with the better it will be for her owner.

New Breeds Not Wanted.

The breeds of fowls which we now have are good enough for all purposes. It is doubtful if anything better will be produced inside of the next quarter of a century. Those who want to keep chickens for profit can find what they need among the existing breeds, and they will do much better by sticking to them, and trying to get the best out of them that is in them, than by spending their time and energies in the effort to originate a new breed.

QUACK DOCTORING.

The writer does not claim to be much of a poultry doctor. We have never made a study of the diseases of poultry, believing that, as a rule, it does not pay to spend time in doctoring a sick fowl. If a fowl meets with an accident, or is taken sick and we happen to know what the trouble is, we do not fail to apply the remedy, if the case is one which gives reasonable promise of bringing about a recovery. Of late years, however, we have fallen into the habit of giving a treatment which gentlemen of the medical profession would call decidedly empirical, but which we believe has saved us many fowls when we were all at sea as to what the trouble was. Whenever we discover a hen moping about one of the poultry houses and find that we cannot make a satisfactory diagnosis of her case, we give her a generous dose of castor oil just for luck. Sometimes the hen dies very suddenly after receiving the dose, but very often she proceeds to get well in a manner which convinces us that it was the castor oil which helped her out of her trouble. We administer the oil by means of a common glass syringe, thrusting the nozzle into the throat and holding the head in a position which will compel the hen to swallow.

Three weeks ago we found one of our choicest hens in what we considered a desperate condition. She would neither eat nor drink, and when closely approached would walk off with that slow, measured stride which we have learned to regard as a dangerous symptom. She was a valuable bird and we did not like to experiment with her, but after closely examining into her case we concluded that it was castor oil or nothing. To-day the hen is as well as ever, and has again taken her place among the best layers on the premises.

We shall not undertake to explain in what manner the castor oil operates to effect a cure in so many of these to us mysterious cases. We do not pretend to know anything about it. Doubtless there are others who understand it. But those who are no better doctors than ourself, and who must practice considerable quackery in their medical attendance upon their fowls, will find that they can pin considerable faith to castor oil. It seems to find the right spot oftener than anything else which can be used at a venture.

Warm the Drinking Water.

When the weather is very cold the water which is given to the laying hens should be warmed. This is more important than many people suppose. If we had to dispense with the warm morning mash or warm drinking water, we would compel the hens to take their breakfast cold. During the coldest of the winter months it will not be necessary to water the hens oftener than twice a day, provided ample time is given for all to drink what they want. They appear to have a great relish for the warm water, and when the dish is set before them of a morning they will consume all of half an hour in getting their fill of it. When they are through empty the water out of the vessel and hang it up where it will not be trampled over by the fowls. In winter we water our chickens at nine and at four o'clock.

Dispense with the Trough,

Never feed whole grain to the chickens from a trough. The stronger birds will get more than their share of the grain, and more than is good for them, while the weaker ones will be underfed. If fed in the yards, scatter the grain over as wide an area as it can be thrown; if in the poultry house, bury it out of sight in straw or leaves.

Show Them the Light.

Accustom your fowls to the lantern light. There will be times when you will find it necessary to go to the poultry house with the lantern, and if the fowls have not before had the light fall on them, it will throw them into a panic and create a commotion about your ears which will be anything but agreeable to you.

It Makes a Big Difference.

A pound of green cut bone a day is regarded as about the right amount for sixteen hens. The bone will cost not to exceed a cent if obtained at the local meat market, or a cent and a half if bought ready cut of the factories. This pound of bone would turn the balance between profit and loss for a large proportion of people who undertake to keep poultry. It would make all the difference between eggs and no eggs on many of the farms where the hens are fed an abundance of grain but are given no regular ration of meat or its equivalent.

NOT WARM ENOUGH.

It is entirely safe to say that many poultrymen could be found at present who have entirely failed to get their hens to lay, and are wondering where they have made their mistake in feeding, when in reality there is nothing the matter with the feed which they have been giving or the manner in which they are giving it. When one fails to get his hens to lay in winter, the fault is not always with the feed. In this northern country at least we are inclined to the belief that the trouble is with the house in which the fowls are kept as much as it is with their bill of fare.

A very large proportion of those who undertake to keep poultry do not fully understand the meaning of the advice to make the poultry house warm. If its walls are like those of the horse barn, and the lights in the sash are whole, they think they have a warm poultry house, and have fully complied with all that could be asked of them on that score. Right here is where a mistake is made the results of which are usually charged to improper modes of feeding.

It is not possible to construct a house which in the north will be too warm for hens that it is expected to make into winter layers. The poultryman cannot put his time to any better use than in banking, papering, curtaining and in every way that he can think of, shutting out the cold from the houses. If he can succeed in making the fowls perfectly comfortable during the cold winter nights, he will find out that his method of feeding has not been as far out of the way as he had supposed. If the house is right the hens will lay. If if anything like good judgment is shown in the feeding, and they are not too old, lousy or out of health.

We do not want to be understood as putting a lower value upon the feeding than it deserves. The fact which we wish to impress is that the most faultless system of feeding will not lead to the production of eggs if the poultry house is not very much warmer than it is considered necessary to make any other building on the farm. The most of the people who fail to get eggs in winter do so because their poultry house is not warm enough. Their feeding may not be altogether right, but in spite of that fact the results would be fairly good if the hens were better protected from the cold.

HIGH PRICED POULTRY.

Talk to some people about paying five dollars for a chicken and they open their eyes in amazement. It is hard to convince such people that any one in his right mind would do such a silly thing as that. And yet it is the five and ten dollar chickens which in proper hands pay the biggest profit. The experience of Grant M. Curtis, of Quincy, Illinois, is a case in point. Mr. Curtis says:

"The writer remembers well of writing to Mr. I. K. Felch, the veteran breeder of Light Brahmas, at Natick, Mass., for two pens of high grade breeders. We did not ask him how cheap a pen we could get, but what two high-scoring pens of six birds each would cost. He replied \$100, provided we took two pens. We did so. We have never regretted that purchase. We have Mr. Felch and our own common sense to thank for getting a right start. Those twelve birds cost us \$100. That looked like an outlandish sum to pay for a dozen "chickens." My acquaintances all thought so, and not a few of them said so, but we were conceited enough to think we knew what we were about. This is how we reasoned the thing out: "One hundred dollars is a good deal to pay for twelve fowls, but these birds are among the finest that long years of conscientious breeding have been able to produce. By paying this sum I get the cream of all those years of study and work. I expect to raise the first year 300 young birds from those two pens. Every one of these 300 chicks will have in their veins the royal blood of their superb parents, and on their plumage will be stamped indelibly the evidence of their proud pedigree. At the end of the first year I will have, not twelve birds, but 312, and instead of being ordinary stock the whole number will be magnificent—the legitimate result of long years of careful breeding. It will cost me no more to raise the 300 fine birds than it will to raise 300 of the veriest scrubs, but what a difference in the results." We were not disappointed. We sold eggs from those old birds at the rate of \$4 per thirteen, and got as high as \$10 each for some of the young cockerels. The first season's young stock paid for the old birds three times over, and left us thirty fine breeders in addition to the first eleven—one hen had died. When we bought the old birds they were pullets and yearling cocks. The cocks we used two years as breeders and the pullets three years. This gives a glimpse into the profitable-ness of that first purchase of ours. We were fortunate enough to get started right, and as a result we are in the business to day on a scale that was not dreamed of when we wrote our first inquiry to Mr. Felch. One hundred dollars was a big sum to put into twelve birds, but when that \$100 was distributed over the large number of fine birds

we raised from them, the \$100 dwindled down to a few cents per head, and we reaped a harvest.

A Necessary Step to Success.

The prices for eggs range about as high during November and December as any time during the year. If you have one or two year old hens, or early hatched pullets, which are not laying now, it will be largely to your future interest to find out the reason why. If you are new to the business you will fret and stew a good deal more over this problem than you ever did over vulgar fractions when you were a boy at school. But if you really succeed in finding out why you have failed to get the eggs it will be worth all the time and money which you have spent upon the flock. The cash which you have dropped for the present will come back to you with interest another year.

Seperate Them.

If one has a lot of cockerels which he is keeping over winter with a view to selling them for breeders in the spring, he had better put them in a pen by themselves, and keep them separate from the pullets. The pullets will not lay nearly so well if they are continually harassed by the cockerels, or if they have to live amid the incessant warfare which is kept up by the cockerels among themselves. This is not fancy. Every experienced poultryman has taken note of the above fact. The cockerels will get along together more peaceably if kept to themselves, and the pullets, free from their annoyance, will be more quiet and docile, and will devote themselves more closely to the business of egg production.

It's the American Way.

It is said that large poultry farms have not been made a success anywhere except in the United States. In England all attempts to put farms of this character on a paying footing have ended in failure. This difference can be due to nothing else than the greater persistence of the Americans in this line of work. It cannot be accounted for on any other ground. There is nothing in the climate which would give us such an advantage over our English cousins.

The annual product of poultry and eggs in the United States has increased

nearly one hundred per cent in ten years. The knowledge that poultry keeping pays is rapidly spreading among the people of this country.

The Cold South Wind.

It is an easy matter to give protection to the north and west sides of the poultry house. There are no windows on those sides, and banking of earth and straw can be used there in any amount sufficient to shut out the cold. It is not so easy to prevent the cold from entering at the south side, as the windows are on that side, and no matter how closely they may fit, they will admit considerable cold when the wind is blowing from that direction. We have never met with any difficulty in keeping the poultry house warm when the wind was blowing its very coldest from the north or west, but it is the south wind which bothers us. When it comes very cold from that direction, as it often does in this western country, the houses become uncomfortable, and there is a falling off in the number of eggs.

Some people in building their poultry houses act on the idea that the south walls can be slighted. We have seen poultry houses well lined with paper on all sides except the south, the owner believing that there was no necessity for putting paper on that side. This is a great mistake. As we have said above, we always dread the cold south winds, and, in spite of the best that we can do in fighting against them, we expect less than the usual number of eggs while they continue. The poultryman makes a serious blunder when in the preparation of his houses for the winter he neglects to use the utmost care in the protection of his flocks against these chilling winds.

The Iowa Homestead believes that the Light Brahma is having more of a boom in the west than any other breed. Next to the Brahma it places the Black Langshan, and after that the Plymouth Rock and the Wyandotte.

It is predicted that there is going to be a genuine revival in the poultry keeping world during the next year, and that those who are nicely fixed in the business will reap more of a harvest than has come to them for several years.

We give five subscriptions for \$1.00.

ALL GOOD BREEDS.

It is a misfortune for a poultryman to allow the idea to take possession of him that there is no breed of fowls which for general usefulness is any approach to the one which he keeps himself. The poultryman should think well of the breed of his choice, but he should know that for the purpose for which poultry is ordinarily kept there is not the difference between breeds which many people have been led to believe. Take what we call the general purpose breeds, the Plymouth Rocks, Wyandottes, Light Brahmas, Langshans, and others of this class. We believe it is entirely safe to say that there is practically no difference between them as egg producers. All of them are being handled for this purpose with great profit, and yet we often hear people making comparisons between them which causes it to appear that one variety is at the top of the heap as egg-producers, while the other is utterly worthless. The writer has heard such a popular breed as the Barred Plymouth Rock condemned as unworthy of a place in any poultry yard, the fault with which they were charged being that they were the poorest layers in the world. Others again will contend that the Plymouth Rocks is the only one of the general purpose breeds worth keeping. Now all this is very silly talk, and the parties who indulge in it betray the fact that they have had a very limited experience in poultry keeping, or else have used their powers of observation to very little purpose. It would be just as sensible to say the Jerseys are the most unprofitable cattle one could keep for butter making, or the Shorthorns for beef, as to contend that the Plymouth Rocks are not a desirable breed as layers.

The Plymouth Rocks are not a favorite breed with the writer to any greater extent than any others of their class. As an actual fact he has succeeded in obtaining somewhat better results with other general purpose breeds, and does not at present keep the Plymouth Rocks. But we should be guilty of a very foolish thing if we should declare it to be a waste of time and effort for a man to try to make money by handling the Plymouth Rocks. And it would be equally so for us to refer in such a manner to any of the popular breeds above named. They all possess sterling qualities, and will give results so nearly alike

when rightly handled that it can hardly be claimed that for practical usefulness there is any difference between them. Candid poultrymen who will not allow personal interest to stand in the way of an honest expression of opinion very generally admit this fact.

A Bad Odor.

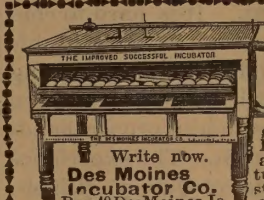
Objection is sometimes made to the use of lime in the poultry house in winter on account of an unpleasant odor to which it seems to give rise, the odor being strongest when the doors of the house are first opened in the morning. This odor is very similar to that which is usually detected about the horse barn, except that it is stronger and more pungent. We are told that it is due to the presence of ammonia which has been liberated from the droppings by the action of the lime. If proper attention is given to cleanliness, we do not think there can be enough of this to cause serious inconvenience. It appears probable, at least, that those who make strong objection to the use of lime on this account do not remove the droppings from the house as often as they should.

They Are Practical.

The idea must not be entertained that thoroughbred fowls are not "practical" fowls. We often hear people refer to a lot of low grade fowls in their possession as practical fowls, as though the practical qualities were something necessarily separate from purity of blood. Some people are thereby led to believe that thoroughbreds are not the best egg producers; that in order to obtain the most satisfactory results in this particular one must select fowls of a non-descript make up from which the practical qualities have not been eliminated by high breeding. The reverse of this is the truth. The best egg producers we have are thoroughbreds. It is true that thoroughbreds can be ruined for egg production by carelessness and neglect, but such treatment will produce the same effect upon the scrub.

Let people keep scrubs if they cannot afford to keep anything better. There is good money even in scrubs if the poultryman who keeps them understands his business. But there is not a particle of truth in the assertion that for the practical qualities which we hear so much about they are better than thoroughbreds. If the thorough-

breeds which are filling our egg baskets this cold winter weather are not practical we do not know what to call them.



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Our magnificent new catalogue giving full information regarding artificial Hatching & Brooding and treatise on poultry raising sent for 1c stamps. Circular free.

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I am prepared to fill orders for fruit trees in any amount, blackberry raspberry and strawberry plants, EVERGREENS AND

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Barred Plymouth Rocks

W. C. Black Polish.

Eggs for hatching \$1.25 per 13, \$2.00 per 26. A year's subscription to the MESSENGER with every order if you mention paper. Good stock and fair play. Write for prices of stock.

WANTS INFORMATION.

"Please give me directions for the winter management of my flock—such as will insure me plenty of eggs. Give all the details."

The above is a paragraph taken from a letter sent to us by a subscriber in Minnesota. Every poultryman of experience knows how difficult it is to give a satisfactory response to such a request. This subscriber does not tell us what kind of chickens she keeps, their age, or what sort of place she has for housing them. Even if all this were given we would still decline to give directions which it were understood were in the nature of a guarantee. If our correspondent had given us more particulars we could have told her the kind and amount of food to give her flock, and advised her how to care for it in a general way, but we would not want her to adhere to this absolutely, as something would come under her notice almost daily which her judgement would tell her called for some departure from our directions. If the writer of this is a regular reader of the poultry papers she ought to be familiar with all we can tell her in regard to getting eggs in winter. During this part of the year it forms the text for a large portion of the articles which appear in the journals, and these articles as a rule are simply a publication of the experience of practical poultry keepers. They contain about all that can be learned upon the subject by reading. If we could visit this subscriber's premises, examine her flock and buildings, and learn what she was feeding and how she was feeding, we believe we could make known to her what to do in order to get her hens started to laying; but not being able to do this, we could not tell her by letter anything more than she already knows as the result of reading the papers.

Get Good Stock.

If it is your purpose to stock your yards with fine birds you must make up your minds to be at some expense for your breeders. Whether you rear them or buy them, you will be obliged to pay about what they are worth. It is an easy matter to get cheap birds if that is what one is looking for. Everybody has plenty of that kind and they are willing to sell them for anything that they can get for them, unless it is breeders of the first class who will not

injure their reputation by sending out inferior stock. There is money in fancy poultry provided it is really good; but there is no way in the world of getting poultry of this kind except by buying of those who are keeping the breed at the highest state of perfection. Any breeder ought to know better than to expect fine exhibition birds from second or third rate stock, and yet many are continually filling their yards with that kind of stock, and are then bitterly lamenting their "luck" by which they are prevented from obtaining results equal to those of some wide-a-wake acquaintance who knows better than to try to conduct his poultry business upon that plan.

Frosted Combs.

We venture to say that many of our readers find some of their laying hens with frosted combs after the late cold snap. In most cases this has been due to some small opening in the poultry house known to the owner, and which he fully intended to close up before the arrival of cold weather. All of us know the importance of having these things looked after in season, but we too often put off something until it is too late. But in this respect poultry keepers do not greatly differ from people of other occupations. The hens which have badly frosted combs are not likely to lay any more until they are healed which will not be before spring. Those which have their combs only slightly frosted at the tips will not be seriously enough affected to make them stop laying. Anoint the combs with vasoline, and while so doing make another resolve that you will not let it happen again.

Ventilation.

Keep the poultry houses closed up as tight as you can make them these cold winter nights. Don't worry about the ventilation. During the warmest part of the day open a window or door for the purpose of admitting fresh air to the house, provided this can be done without danger of frosting the combs of the fowls. Fresh air is important, but it can be dispensed with rather than risk frozen combs in the getting of it. Some people are a little "daft" on the subject of ventilation, and think the poultry house must be aired every day, no matter what the outside temperature may be. There is reason in all

things, even in the manner of furnishing fresh air to a flock of chickens.

A Useful Device.

We have just made a drinking fountain which beats anything we ever used, considering the expense. We took an old bake pan and then sawed out a half inch board so that it fit in the pan, then one inch holes were bored in it about two inches apart and then placed in the pan which is filled with water. The fowls can drink through the holes in the board and not get their wattles wet, which saves them from getting frosted, as the wattles will freeze much quicker when wet.—Iowa State Poultry Journal

The Iowa Homestead, now in its fortieth year, still continues to occupy the front rank among the agricultural papers of the country. Its editorials are always interesting, practical and timely, and thousands of its readers unite in testifying that they save them many times the subscription price during the year. Its Sheep, Horticultural, Poultry, Veterinary and Dairy Departments are ably conducted and always full of useful, practical information in relation to these specialties, and its Home Department, teeming with a wealth of editorial suggestions and bright, crisp contributions, proves to be just what farmers' wives and daughters need to lighten their daily labor and brighten their daily lives. As an all round farm paper the Homestead has no superior, and its twenty-four ample pages each week contain something of interest and instruction for every member of the farmer's household. Send for free sample copies. Subscription price \$1 per year. Address, Homestead Co., Des Moines, Iowa.

Barred
Plymouth
Rocks,
AND
Black Langshans.

Fine Stock for Little Money

Choice cockerals for sale of both breeds at \$1.00 each. Plymouth Rock pullets at 75 cents each. My stock is very fine. It will please you.

M. PARROTT,
Aurelia, Iowa.

The Old Hens.

One of the most serious objections to keeping old hens is their lateness of moulting. It is generally advised not to keep a hen longer than three years at most, and the majority of poultrymen agree that she should be disposed of before she enters upon her third winter. It may be that a hen four or five years old will lay as many eggs in the course of a year as one that is younger, but she will lay too large a proportion of them in spring, summer and fall when prices are lowest. In early winter when the pullets and younger hens are making the best profit for their owner, she will be in the midst of her moult, and the older she grows the later this process will be lengthened out into the winter. Various other reasons could be given for disposing of the hens as soon after they become two years old as possible, but that above mentioned is the one of most importance. Some "taking" things in favor of the old hens have recently been said by a high authority, and there is danger of amateur poultry keepers who have read these articles pinning their faith to the elderly biddies in a stronger manner even than the writer of said articles would recommend.

An Inquiry.

A correspondent wants to know if it will be safe to breed from fowls which are undersized on account of being late hatched. He procured some Langshan eggs last June and now has a flock of very fine birds except that they are lacking in size. It was his intention to use them as breeders, but he now hesitates to do so, fearing that the progeny will not be up to standard weight. He wants our advice in the matter. If the birds are full bloods their progeny will not be deficient in size or weight, provided, of course, that they are hatched in proper season.

Make a Yard.

There are many days in winter when it is too cold to allow the hens to leave the house and wander at will about the place, and yet it would be to their advantage to get out in the open air provided they could be kept close to the south side of the building and protected from the cold north wind. It is an excellent plan to make a small temporary yard in front of the house in which

the hens can take an airing on such days without danger of freezing their combs. On milder days when it will be safe to give them full liberty they need not be confined to this small yard. Poultry netting is cheap, and such a space as we have reference to can be enclosed at trifling expense. Two posts and two rods of wire will do it. On the farms it is a common sight to see the hens even on the coldest days of winter huddled together on some imperfectly sheltered spot about the grounds. This is simply the ruin of the hens as winter layers. A yard which would keep them within bounds on such days and prevent such exposure would be worth many times its cost to their owner.

Remedies in a Nutshell.

You can cut off the combs of fowls if you prefer. Use a sharp knife; cut off both combs and wattles. To prevent bleeding, first wash the head with strong alum-water, and then sprinkle with powdered tannin.

For swelled eyes, bathe the head with a warm solution made by dissolving a teaspoonful of powdered boracic acid in a pint of water, and then anoint with a few drops of glycerine. Repeat this daily.

For roup, dissolve a teaspoonful of chloride of lime in a pint of water, and give the bird a teaspoon of the solution. Burn tar and turpentine in the poultry house after the fowls have gone to the roost at night.

For soft-shell eggs, put the hens at work scratching, as it indicates they are too fat. Soft eggs, apoplexy, egg-bound and nearly all such diseases, are due to the hens being too fat.

For indigestion give plenty of sharp gravel, and also a teaspoonful of fennugreek, in the soft food, for every ten hens.—Poultry Keeper.

A Warm Supper.

Much is said about the importance of the warm breakfast for the hens, and we believe it is a decided advantage. But we hear less about the warm supper. It is no trouble to set a panful of shelled corn in the oven of the kitchen stove half an hour before feeding time, and then carry it out to the hens just before they go to their roosts. We have thought that we have been well paid for pursuing this plan during very cold weather. Of course it makes a little more "fussing" in connection with the

work of looking after the fowls, but one should not object to this if the results seem to be of a kind which pay for the trouble. We seriously doubt if the warm breakfast pays any better for the trouble of preparing it than the warm supper. On days when the corn is given in this manner, we scatter about half a feed of grain in the scratching pen between three and four o'clock so as to keep the fowls exercising until the hour for going to roost.

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Success With Poultry.

This is a new work on poultry, compiled and written by the editor of THE RELIABLE POULTRY JOURNAL. It is meant as a source of timely information to persons who are thinking of engaging in the poultry business on a large scale for profit. It has just been published, and is believed to be the most complete work on the subject to date. There is not a dead line in it. The book is handsomely illustrated with etchings and half-tones, showing the leading breeds of fowls, practical poultry houses, views and plans of poultry farms, views and plans of broiler houses, valuable matter on the care of adult fowls, the care of brooder chicks, on artificial incubation, rules for operating incubators and brooders, directions for caponizing, preparing and shipping poultry to market, etc.

The publisher's price for this book is \$1. Any person sending ONE DOLLAR to this office will receive a copy of "Success with Poultry" (postpaid) and THE RELIABLE POULTRY JOURNAL for one entire year.

Address, RELIABLE POULTRY JOURNAL, Quincy, Ill.

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lying along and owned by the Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad Company, and which that company offers at low prices and on long terms. Special inducements and facilities offered to go and examine these lands both in Southern Illinois and in the Yazoo Valley, Miss. For further description, map and any information, address or call upon E. P. SKENE, Land Commissioner, No. 1 Park Row, Chicago, Ill., or G. W. McGINNIS, Ass't Land Commissioner, Memphis, Tenn.

For Cholera.

Dilute 8 dr. carbolic crystals in a pint of water, and of this mixture take one tablespoonful to one of milk, mix and moisten bread crumbs for feed. If the fowl declines to eat, form it into pellets and insert it into the throat. After the disease is subdued, give a small dose of castor oil, or a one-half tablespoonful of pulverized rhubarb. In the first stage of the disease, give two or three drops of laudanum in a little milk, by inserting the same into the mouth three times a day. Do not depend on mixing it in the food.—Fanciers' Gazette.

Save the Bones.

Anyone who keeps a flock of hens should be careful not to waste any meat scraps or bones. Some people, on account of the smallness of their flock, cannot keep a bone cutter. It would not pay them to go to the expense of getting one of these machines. But all the bones which pass through the family kitchen can be reduced to a shape suitable for the chickens, and they contain just the elements of which otherwise well fed flocks stand most in need. Nearly all these bones can be crushed with a hatchet or an ax, and if they are regularly treated in this way and given to the hens, the owner will have no occasion to ask anyone what he must do to get his hens to lay in winter or any other time of the year.

Not Worth Her Salt.

The small, runty pullet which you are keeping in your poultry house hoping that it may outgrow its weakness and amount to something sometime, had better have its head chopped off and the carcass thrown away. It was a mistake to allow it room in the coop in the first place. It will be the first to take any disease which may come about, and may be the means of introducing disease into your flock. Don't have such stock as that around. It never pays for its keeping.

Layers of the Largest Egg.

It would naturally be supposed that the larger breeds of chickens lay the largest egg. But this is not the case. The Minorca lays the largest egg of any breed, and yet it is not as large a fowl as the Plymouth Rock. The Minorca is already a popular fowl, but if eggs were sold by weight it would have a regular boom.

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The Alpine Skirt Retainer

Remedies all that. It can readily be applied to any costume. It holds the skirt and blouse in position, prevents exposure of underskirt, and is simple and inexpensive. For sale by all leading dry goods dealers, or for 10 cents in stamps, we will mail you a sample from the factory. Address

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The greatest aid yet gotten up for keeping a strict record and account of the poultry business. Price..... .25

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Catalogue of poultry supplies, books, &c., for a 2-cent stamp.

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BREEDERS' CARDS.

Thirty words three months for sev-
enty-five cents.

A. F. Hunter, editor of Farm Poultry, has entered a \$5000 damage suit against the publishers of the Western Poultry News. He thinks that would be about the proper amount for them to pay him for printing an article in their journal charging him with questionable methods in connection with his poultry business. It all came about in this way: W. B. Davis, of Sutherland, this state, bought a setting of eggs of Mr. Hunter last spring. He was not pleased with the hatch, as he only got four chicks, and some of these had feathered legs and single combs, though they were to be full blooded White Wyandottes. Mr. Davis says he wrote to Mr. Hunter stating the ill success of the hatch, and received a discourteous letter in reply. He then sent the facts to the Western Poultry News, and the editors published the communication together with such comments as they thought the circumstances of the case would warrant. And Mr. Hunter feels that this has injured his good name and business about \$5000 worth. It would hardly be supposed that this is the same big-hearted Hunter who has been using the columns of his paper to prejudice the minds of the public against the new poultry journals which have lately been started, even going so far as to advise his readers not to patronize them in any way. His efforts in this direction have probably been the means of wrecking half a score of new poultry papers, to which a refined sense of honor and generosity would have prompted him to have given encouragement and support. But strange as it may appear, this is the very same man. While claiming the right to do what he has a mind to with a view to injuring the business of

others, and exercising the right in the most cruel and offensive way, he wants it understood that nobody must do anything to injure his interests. The medicine which he mixes for others is terribly nauseating when forced down his own throat. The struggling, overworked editors whom without reason or excuse he has wronged and insulted, will give him little sympathy in the event that the case above alluded to goes against him.

All advertising don't pay, but all advertising will pay if it is done as it should be done, and the thing offered for sale is worth having at the price asked for it.

It is announced that the Wapsie Valley Poultry Club will unite with the Cedar Rapids Poultry Association in an exhibition to be held in Cedar Rapids December 30th, to January 4th. With the added strength this will give, and the offering of more actual cash premiums than any show in the state, leaves no reasonable doubt that the exhibition will be one of the best held in Iowa.

Breeders of thoroughbred poultry sometimes advertise the fact that they keep "all leading varieties" in a way which does them no good. We know of a party who obtained a setting of Barred Plymouth Rock eggs from such a breeder, and hatched out from them Barred Plymouth Rocks, Black Langshans and Light Brahmas. The next time this party wants a setting of eggs he will try and find a breeder who does not have varieties on the brain to such an extent as would lead him to exhibit them in that way.

If it is your desire to have your premises stocked with thoroughbred birds, get eggs or birds from some breeder. Do not adopt the plan of grading up, if you really want something which will bear a favorable comparison with the average of good, thoroughbred stock. Life is too short to try to obtain a flock of first-class fowls by such a round about process as that. The cost of getting a start in thoroughbred stock is really very small, when one goes about it in the right way. It will be very expensive to anyone who seeks to reach that end by the slow, poking method of grading up. It will be almost half a lifetime before he will have birds which

will breed true like the best strains of any of the established breeds.

You will have nothing to regret if you ship your poultry to Summers, Morrison & Co.

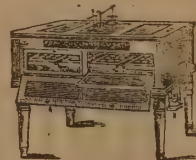
John Ornellas, Box 3124, Springfield, Ill., has for sale Fancy Pigeons, Fancy Poultry, Ring Doves, Guinea Pigs, Red Birds and Canary Birds. Enclose stamp for reply.

Good Birds at Rock Bottom Prices.

Pure bred Black Langshans of both sexes. Cockerels \$1 each, pullets 50 cents. Also Light Brahma cockerels at same price. No better stock in Iowa. MRS. J. A. BOYNTON, Clarion, Wright county, Iowa.

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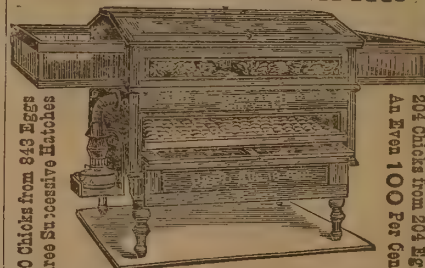
says: "If I were going to buy for myself I would give the Von Culin the preference." Book Incubation, 5 cts. Von Culin Incubator Co., Delaware City, Del.

POULTRY DISEASES The most valuable treatise on Roup, Sorehead, diphtheritic sore throat, Canker mouth, Catarrh, etc., ever written. Absolutely free. Send 3 cents in stamps to pay postage.

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QUINCY, ILLINOIS.

Notes About Chickens and Fruits,
And Answers to Queries.

Address all communications for this department to O. P. Greer, Bourbon, Indiana, and mention the MESSENGER.

A change of food is good for your fowls. It will sometimes cure a sick bird if you will change their food.

Use the hatchet freely, not as the father of our country did when he cut down the finest cherry tree, but use it on all disqualified birds, in fact use it on all birds that will score under ninety points. The fancier that desires to reach the top round in the ladder and remain there must use the hatchet freely.

Bad food and stagnant drinking water is usually the cause of cholera. Will you take warning before some of your best fowls are dead.

Buckwheat is said to be an excellent food for laying hens, but do not use too freely.

Make charcoal by burning corn until it is charred. It is said to be an excellent food and will increase the number of eggs.

Do not mix lime in food, they are liable to eat more than is good for them.

It is the time now to look for cracks in the poultry house and cover them over with tar paper or heavy building paper. Cold draughts and roup go hand in hand.

Carbolic acid is one of the best things you can use around the poultry house. Put one ounce in a gallon of water, with a spray pump or broom sprinkle the house and roosts.

The last week in September was the agricultural fair at Bremen, Indiana. I assisted in judging the poultry and must say there was some fine birds on exhibition. The varieties were well represented. There were birds at the Bremen fair that would have been a credit to many that I saw at the great World's Fair poultry show. There were perhaps between three and four hundred birds on exhibition, a good showing for a township fair. This is the third year that I have judged the poultry there.

I do not believe in the plan of mating to produce cockerels and pullets separately as many breeders do. Any variety that is pure in blood and has been bred in line for a number of years will

produce good results with strictly standard mating.

Give me the origin of the Barred Plymouth Rock?

Just when and how the Barred Plymouth Rock originated is not positively known. It is generally conceded however that they are a cross between the old single comb Dominique and Black Java. There has been a number of controversies in the poultry journals in regard to the origin of the Plymouth Rock, yet no positive facts were brought forth that were perfectly satisfactory to the readers. It is said, I believe, that the name Plymouth Rock was given by a man living in Putnum, Conn.

What is meant by Vulture hock?

By Vulture hock is meant large and stiff feathers projecting out from the hock joint and having a resemblance to the feathers on Vultures, instead of soft, curly feathers.

I have two or three hens that pick the feathers from the head of the male. Can you tell me what to do to cure them of the habit?

Give them plenty of meat and salty food, and see that they have a grass run. This will nearly always effect a cure.

What is the points in condition?

Condition in the standard means symptoms of disease, effects of frosting, soiled or broken plumage, sores caused by fighting and perhaps other things that I can't think of just now.

If you have a thrifty young orchard three or four years old it will be well worth your while to devote a few hours this month to giving trees some protection from sun scald. You will not have much of anything else to do between now and the first of January, and even though you were very busy you could not well employ your time more profitably.

A piece of wire gauze is the best thing to wrap about the trunks of young trees as a protection from the mice and rabbits. Have ordinary window netting cut into strips eight or ten inches wide across the roll. Wrap about the tree and it will retain its shape without tying. It will prove a protection from borers as well as rabbits and mice.

An orchard that at the same time is the poultry yard will produce, not only a larger quantity of fruit, but that of a better quality.

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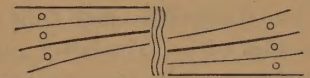
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Fruit Growing.

This is about the time of year to cover the strawberry bed. The surface of the ground is now frozen hard, and a thaw may occur next month. It is the alternate freezing and thawing that does the damage, and the main object is to maintain the frozen condition of the ground until spring. One must be careful in the selection of material for covering, and make sure that he does not cover too deeply. Sweet corn stalks or bean stalks are about the best thing to use for the purpose, and stable litter the worst. The latter, besides packing too closely, is very apt to contain weed seeds which will take root about the plants and greatly add to the labor of cultivation next season.

If one is growing fruit only for family use, it is very shortsighted in him to invest in the attractive new things—the novelties—which are so strongly urged upon buyers every year. Novelties as a rule are unprofitable things for anyone but the professional fruit grower to meddle with. The latter generally understands his business well enough to know a good thing when he sees it, or at least not to be wheedled into taking hold of it in a way in which he would risk meeting with serious loss. The ordinary fruit grower had better be content with well tried varieties, and leave all costly experimenting to those who are better fitted than himself for testing the virtues of the novelties. The most of the novelties are either frauds, or old acquaintances in disguise.

The space between the trees of a young orchard cannot be put to a better use than be planted to currants. If the trees have been properly cultivated the ground is in exactly the right condition for starting the currants, and the partial shade of the trees will be more of an advantage than otherwise. It is now generally conceded that the best time to start the currant is in the fall.

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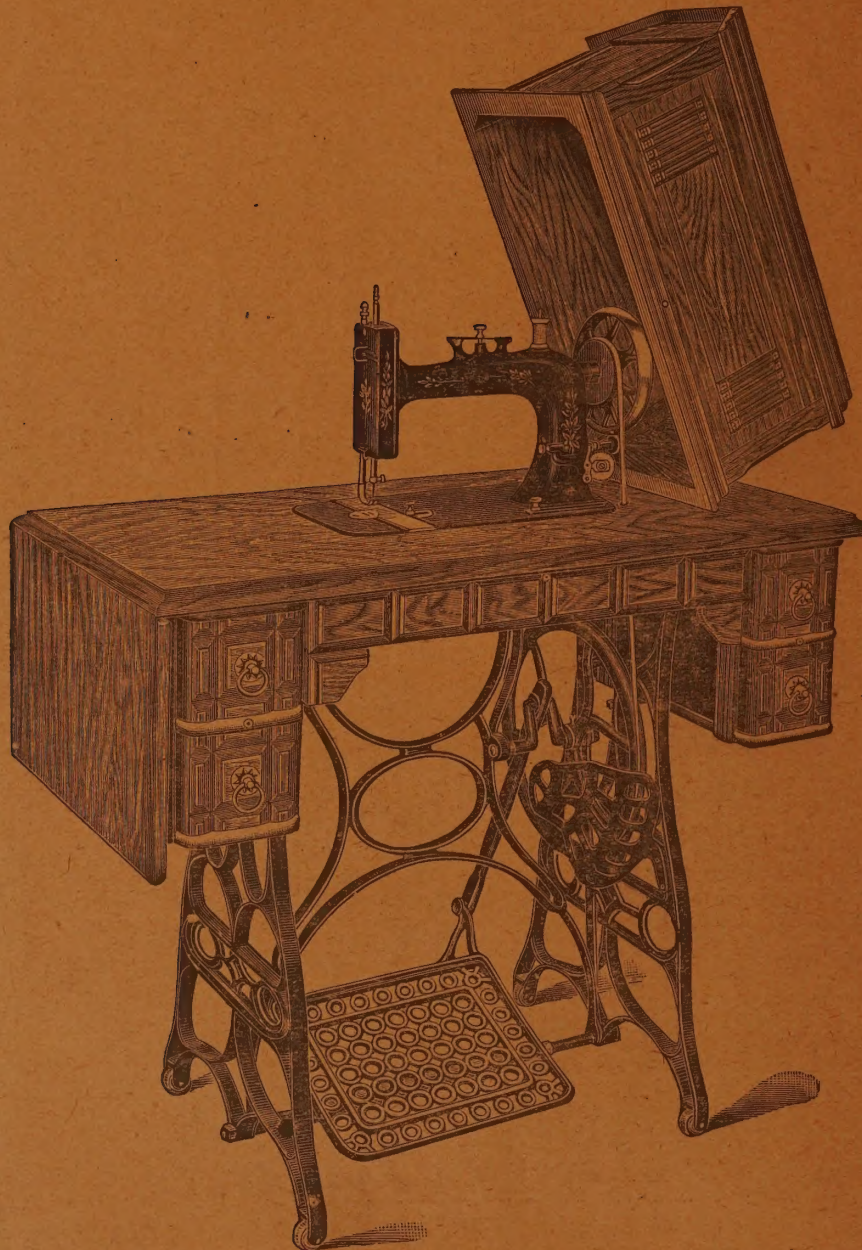


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